

SAMA Summer Preceptorship Program

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THIS SUMMER THE Student American Medical Association is establishing a summer preceptorship for medical students, placing them in community hospitals and clinics. The project is entitled MECO (Medical Education and Community Orientation); and the California Medical Association and the California Hospital Association have endorsed MECO and are participating in its development for summer, 1971.

The initial project was begun in Illinois in 1969, and has since expanded to 20 states. An in-depth study of the medical students, hospitals and physicians participating revealed that the program was generally a rewarding educational experience for those involved.

MECO is designed to permit the student to rotate through the clinical and non-clinical areas of a community hospital and the community it serves, under the direct supervision of physicians and staff. Under the direction of a community physician, the student will be able to observe and assist in the care of in-patients on the medical and surgical services and in the care of outpatients in the physician's office and extended care facilities. He will be able to study health and health care delivery problems specific

to that community and to formulate solutions to them.

It is hoped that by introducing the student to non-university, community hospitals and thus to future practice opportunities, he can better plan his medical education so that following his medical training, he may return to these areas to practice. MECO, therefore, provides the opportunity for community hospitals and practicing physicians to participate in undergraduate medical education, while simultaneously contributing to the alleviation of our current health care delivery crisis.

The practicing physician's knowledge of the community in which he practices will add immeasurably to the student's ability to observe, assess and participate in patient care. By working together, practicing physicians and medical students will discover a greater awareness of each other's attitudes and problems and those of the community.

Each student in the project is paid \$65 to \$80 a week educational stipend, plus room and board where available. The money for this is provided by the participating hospital.

Doctors interested in participating should contact their hospital's chief of staff or chief administrator, both of whom have already been contacted.

The authors are SAMA-MECO State Project Coordinators. Mrs. Gots is a student at USC School of Medicine and Mr. Tomita, a student at UC, San Francisco, School of Medicine.